



**Request for City Council Committee Action
From the City Attorney's Office**

Date: May 28, 2002
To: Ways & Means/Budget Committee
Subject: City Attorney's Office 2002 Work Plan

Recommendation: That the Ways & Means/Budget Committee receive and file the City Attorney's Office 2002 Work Plan.

Prepared by: Jay M. Heffern

Phone: 673-3272

Approved by: _____

Jay M. Heffern
City Attorney

Presenter in Committee: Jay M. Heffern, City Attorney

Financial Impact (Check those that apply)

- ☒ No financial impact - or - Action is within current department budget.
(If checked, go directly to Background/Supporting Information)
☐ Action requires an appropriation increase to the Capital Budget
☐ Action requires an appropriation increase to the Operating Budget
☐ Action provides increased revenue for appropriation increase
☐ Action requires use of contingency or reserves
☐ Other financial impact (Explain): _____
☐ Request provided to the Budget Office when provided to the Committee Coordinator

Background/Supporting Information

Attached is the proposed 2002 Work Plan for the City Attorney's Office. It is divided into two parts: programmatic initiatives and management/administration objectives. On May 1, 2002, the Executive Committee reviewed the Work Plan and referred it to the Ways & Means/Budget Committee.

OFFICE OF THE CITY ATTORNEY

2002 WORK PLAN

PROGRAMMATIC INITIATIVES

OBJECTIVE #1

Enhance the City Attorney's Office vigorous prosecution of domestic assault crimes.

City Goal #1: Build Community

ACTION PLAN

- Continue to provide a grant-funded domestic violence prosecutor at the Minneapolis Police Department's Family Violence Unit to work with the Family Violence Unit investigators to evaluate, prioritize, and investigate high-risk misdemeanor and gross misdemeanor domestic abuse cases.
- Work with the Minneapolis Police Department's Family Violence Unit and the Hennepin County Attorney's Office to coordinate the earliest possible identification and charging of those domestic cases that should receive felony investigation and be reviewed for felony charging.
- Continue to participate in the Domestic Violence Steering committee with the Minneapolis Police Department, the Hennepin County Attorney's Office, the Domestic Abuse Project, and the Battered Women's Justice Project to identify grant opportunities to improve the police, advocate, and prosecutorial response to domestic abuse cases.
- Evaluate the Battered Women's Justice Project Audit recommendations and implement the feasible recommendations.

OBJECTIVE #2

Design and implement a community attorney "pilot project" to align community concerns with prosecution priorities.

City Goal #1: Build Community

ACTION PLAN

- Assign a "community attorney" to the 4th Precinct who will provide direct interaction with police and community members in the 4th Precinct in order better to serve the needs of that community.
- Work with the Minneapolis Police Department's 4th Precinct to identify chronic and high priority offenders in the precinct.
- Ensure that those chronic and high priority offenders are priorities for the City Attorney's Office special prosecution team.
- Train 4th Precinct personnel on good police report writing and provide timely feedback on police reports which are excellent or deficient.
- Establish communication links with neighborhoods and community organizations in 4th Precinct.

OBJECTIVE #3

Utilize the lessons learned from the Somali liaison grant to improve relationships with all immigrant communities in Minneapolis.

City Goal #1: Build Community

ACTION PLAN

- Complete the work of the Somali liaison grant, evaluate the grant's effectiveness, and determine whether the grant's goals and objectives were met.
- Implement the feasible recommendations of the advisory committee for criminal justice interaction with the Somali community.
- Apply for additional grant funds to continue the Somali liaison position for a second year.
- Use the lessons learned from the Somali liaison grant to establish relationships with other immigrant communities to understand better the cultural and societal issues that impact those communities' interactions with prosecutors and the criminal justice system.

OBJECTIVE #4

Assess how the criminal justice system can address better the problems raised when mentally ill people become involved in the criminal justice system as defendants.

City Goal #1: Build Community

ACTION PLAN

- Participate in the Hennepin County District Court Mental Health Planning process to determine whether it is feasible to create a mental health court involving Minneapolis misdemeanor and gross misdemeanor cases.
- Participate in grant-funded site visits to mental health courts in other cities to evaluate those jurisdictions' mental health courts.
- Participate in the District Court's planning effort to ensure that the planning process includes a strong focus on how mental health issues affect the prosecution of livability crimes in Minneapolis.
- Participate in the application, if it occurs, for implementation funding to initiate a mental health court in Hennepin County.

• OBJECTIVE #5

Collaborate with the City's neighborhood restorative justice programs so that community concerns about livability crimes are better addressed.

City Goal #1: Build Community

ACTION PLAN

- Review the Office's diversion policies for community-based restorative justice programs to determine whether the diversion policies should be standardized.
- Continue to review eligible cases and refer appropriate cases to community-based restorative justice programs.
- Seek grant funding to address the problems created by chronic offenders.
- Upon receipt of grant funding, form a steering committee to determine how best to address chronic offenders in these communities with restorative justice programs.
- Provide support to restorative justice programs in their efforts to expand the geographic boundaries of their programs.
- Explore the possibility of linkage between various diversion and restorative justice programs such as exploring whether the PRIDE program could include a restorative justice component as part of its treatment program.

OBJECTIVE #6

Propose systemic changes to the current prosecution process for petty misdemeanors so that resource expenditures for these low-level cases are minimized.

City Goal #1: Build Community

ACTION PLAN

- Establish an inter-disciplinary task force involving the City Attorney's Office, the Minneapolis Police Department, the Hennepin County Violations Bureau and the Hennepin County District Court to review the Rules of Criminal Procedures and current court practices to determine whether fewer resources could be expended in the resolution of petty misdemeanors.
- If the task force determines that Criminal Rule changes are required, work with the court to seek those rule changes.
- If the task force determines that statutory changes are needed to implement proposed solutions to current practices, propose those law changes through the City's intergovernmental relations process.

OBJECTIVE #7

Link court calendar information on the City's or the City Attorney's web site in order to provide public access to court information about gross misdemeanor and misdemeanor cases.

City Goal #1: Build Community

ACTION PLAN

- Work with the Hennepin County District Court, Hennepin County IT Department, and the City of Minneapolis ITS Department to create an implementation plan to link to District Court calendar information in an internet-accessible format with the City's and/or City Attorney's web site.
- Work with community organizations, the Minneapolis Police Department, and the City's Communications Department to develop a strategy for informing the citizens of Minneapolis about the availability of this information on a City web site.

OBJECTIVE #8

Collaborate with state, county, and city criminal justice information boards, committees, and personnel so that the City Attorney's Office criminal justice information needs are addressed.

City Goal #4: Provide Strong Leadership and Management

ACTION PLAN

- Work with the ITS Department to integrate the City Attorney's Office criminal justice system information with the CrimNet and MNCIS integration efforts.
- In collaboration with the City's ITS Department, procure funding, through grants if possible, for purchase and operation of a fully-functional prosecution case management system that will assist the City Attorney's Office in managing its human resources and criminal justice caseload and integrating its information with the courts and other criminal justice agencies both within the County and statewide.
- Participate in joint state, county and city level planning for criminal justice information integration efforts through the CrimNet Policy Board and its various committees.
- Participate in the Criminal Justice Coordinating Committee's efforts to integrate criminal justice system information processes and business practices.

OBJECTIVE #9

Aggressively support the City's affordable housing policies.

City Goal #1: Build Community
City Goal #4: Provide Strong
Leadership &

ACTION PLAN

- In collaboration with the Regulatory Services Department, complete the Tenants Remedies Act (TRA) pilot project and report to the PS & RS and W&M/Budget Committees in September 2002 on the effectiveness of the project.
- In collaboration with stakeholders, develop a process to identify qualified persons to serve as administrators under the TRA by developing criteria to guide the selection of an administrator, reviewing the criteria with the stakeholders and the district court, and implementing the process.
- Draft an ordinance establishing a revolving fund to permit court appointed administrators to finance repairs to residential rental properties subject to a TRA order, so that code violations are promptly and effectively remedied.
- Review the feasibility of using the City's existing revolving fund procedures set out in M.C.O., Chapter 249 to rehabilitate nuisance properties and assess the cost of rehabilitation against the property.
- Draft legislation to amend Minn. Stat. § 504B.401, subd. 2 (Tenants Remedies Act) to broaden the service of process window so that the City can bring non-complying property owners into court more quickly and shorten the time to gain compliance with the City's regulatory codes.

OBJECTIVE #10

Provide advice to the elected officials and the Redistricting Commission on the legal requirements for redistricting the City of Minneapolis.

City Goal #4: Provide Strong Leadership and Management

ACTION PLAN

- Review the Minnesota Statutes, Minneapolis City Charter, and relevant cases on redistricting in light of the redistricting plan adopted by the Minnesota Legislature.
- In collaboration with the City Clerk and City's Elections Staff revise, as necessary, the written materials for the Mayor, City Council members, and members of the Redistricting Commission.
- Provide ongoing legal advice to the Redistricting Commission as it develops a redistricting plan for City ward boundaries and Park Board district boundaries.
- Brief the Mayor and City Council on the legal requirements for redistricting in light of the Legislature's redistricting plan and the City's redistricting plan.

OBJECTIVE #11

Assist the City in achieving compliance with the Governmental Accounting Standard Board Statement No. 34 (GASB 34).

City Goal #4: Provide strong leadership and management

ACTION PLAN

- Review the GASB 34 standards in order to support the Finance Department Work Team addressing liability fund compliance with GASB 34.
- Assist the Finance Department Work Team by defining the litigation and preventative liability practice activities and services provided by the City Attorney's Office and supported by the liability fund.
- Assist the Finance Department in developing fund standards and a rate model which accurately describe the costs of the litigation and preventative liability activities and services provided by the City Attorney's Office and supported by the liability fund.

OBJECTIVE #12

Develop two comprehensive public law training programs: Tenants Remedies Act and Public Employment Law Issues.

City Goal #4: Provide Strong Leadership and Management

ACTION PLAN

1. Tenants Remedies Act

- Develop an education program which addresses Minneapolis's initiatives regarding tenants remedies actions.
- Conduct the training for office attorneys, public or private attorneys, and others who may wish to attend.

2. Public Employment Law Issues

- Develop an education program which addresses public employment law issues, including, disability, Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and other public employment law issues.
- Present a training program to the State Board of Continuing Legal Education in order to secure designation of the program as a course eligible for continuing legal education credits.
- Conduct the training for office attorneys, public or private attorneys, and others who may wish to attend.

MANAGEMENT/ADMINISTRATION

OBJECTIVE #1

Continue to maintain an office environment that is respectful of individuals.

ACTION PLAN

- Building upon prior City Attorney's Office programs in the area of diversity and respect for individuals in the workplace, design a training plan meeting the office's needs.
- Identify and retain appropriate City or non-City resources to provide the training.
- Train all office employees.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the training.

OBJECTIVE #2

Train all office managers and supervisors in the areas of time management, program management, and coaching.

ACTION PLAN

- Identify available training resources for each subject area.
- Select and retain City or non-City training resources for each subject area.
- Schedule all managers and supervisors for training.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the training.

OBJECTIVE #3

Develop a mentoring program to assist in the professional development of new staff and recent hires.

ACTION PLAN

- Convene an office-wide department work team from all classifications to develop an office mentoring program for new staff and recent hires.
- Review mentoring programs from other governmental jurisdictions to determine the "best practices" for mentoring programs.
- Design the mentoring program for the City Attorney's Office.
- Implement mentoring program.

OBJECTIVE #4

Review and revise, if necessary, the current performance measurement indicators used by the City Attorney's Office so that the organizational objectives are achieved and the divisions are held accountable.

ACTION PLAN

- Convene an office-wide work team to review the current performance measurement indicators for both the Criminal and Civil divisions.
- Confer with the City's Director of Performance Management and Business Planning to identify gaps in the existing indicators and to improve the existing indicators.
- Revise, as necessary, the performance measurement indicators in the City Attorney's Office Business Plan.
- Revise, as necessary, the Office's performance appraisal system to ensure that the contributions of individual staff members in meeting organizational objectives are fully and accurately measured.

OBJECTIVE #5

Develop a cross training and skill development program for the City Attorney's Office personnel.

ACTION PLAN

- As part of workforce planning, identify those skills sets that are necessary for effective performance by all levels of City Attorney's Office personnel.
- Identify those cross training methods and techniques that are most likely to enhance the skill sets of office personnel.
- Work with the City's Human Resources Department to select and retain necessary City or non-City training resources.
- Identify those Office who can benefit from this training.
- Complete the training.

OBJECTIVE #6

Draft and execute service agreements between the City Attorney's Office and the Risk Management and the Communications departments.

City Goal #4: Provide Strong Leadership and Management

ACTION PLAN

- Draft proposed service agreements for the Risk Management and the Communications departments that identify the legal services the Office will provide and the individuals or unit responsible for delivering these services, as well as the services each department will provide the Office and the individuals responsible for delivering those services.
- Meet with each department head and finalize the service agreements.

OBJECTIVE #7

Design and implement a system to accurately account for staff time on Civil Division cases and assignments.

City Goal #4: Provide strong leadership and management

ACTION PLAN

- Convene a Civil Division work team to review current "best practices" for time accounting by government and private sector law offices.
- Review the Civil Division's current time accounting procedures in light of the best practices analysis to determine whether the Civil Division time accounting procedures should be modified to meet the best practices standards to accurately record staff time spent on each client and department matter.
- Review the Civil Division's time accounting software system to determine whether the system support to best practices time accounting procedures and accurately accounts for time spent on each client and department matter.
- If the current software time accounting system is deficient, work with the ITS Department to purchase and install a software system which will accurately and reliably account for staff time spent on each Civil Division case and assignment.
- Train Civil Division staff on any new or modified time accounting procedures or software to ensure that the time accounting system accurately records Civil Division staff time for each case and assignment.